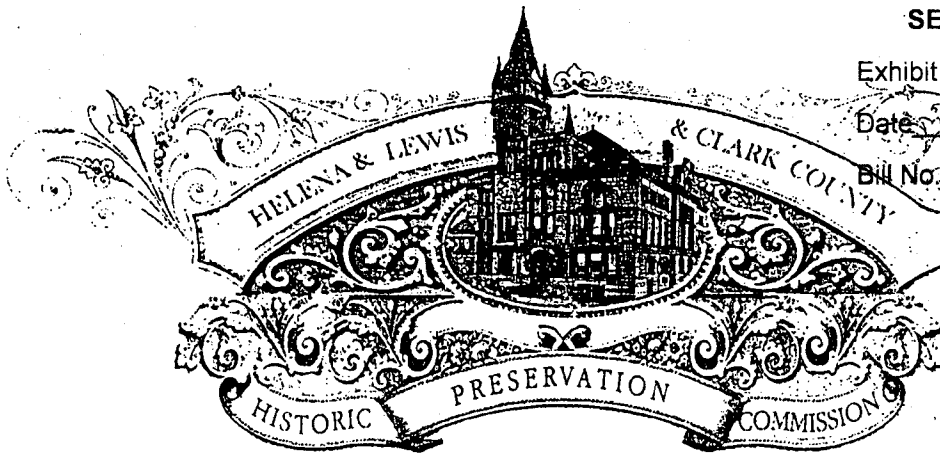


Exhibit No. 18Date 4-10-07 #1Bill No. HB 480

HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
COMMISSION
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Historic Preservation
Officer

County Planning Office
City-County
Building,
316 N. Park Helena
Mt 59623
406.447.8357
pputz@co.lewis-clark.mt.us

November 6, 2006


David Beaver, HPO
Deer Lodge Historic Preservation
Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS
266 Warren Lane
Deer Lodge, MT 59722-0790

Dear David and Members of the Commission,

Please accept on behalf of the Helena/Lewis and Clark County Historic Preservation Commission an expression of the Commission's sincere regret upon hearing about the loss of the Rialto Theater in Deer Lodge. We know how hard members of the Deer Lodge community worked to save this building and we always appreciated the efforts made in that regard.

Please also know that our Commission believes that the community of Deer Lodge remains an inspiration to everyone in Montana who watched the efforts to restore the Rialto over the years. The spirit, persistence and increasing success of Deer Lodge in all of its historic preservation efforts is a story that gives every preservationist hope. The tragic loss of the Rialto cannot erase what has been achieved in that sense. That achievement is and will remain a gift to our history.

Sincerely,


Paul Putz
Helena/Lewis and Clark County Historic Preservation Officer

RIALTO SCHEDULE

2006-2007

**Sept. 29-Oct.1, 2006, Fri. & Sat. evenings, Sunday matinee,
Cutler Brothers film**

Oct. 24, 2006, Tues., PCHS Fall Concert

Oct. 30, 2006, Mon. 1:45pm, Montana Rep Educational Outreach

**Nov.17-18, 2006, Fri.-Sat., PCHS Play (no movie this weekend)
Rehearsals during the week.**

**Dec.1-2, 2006, Friday evening and Saturday afternoon, Free
Movie in conjunction with Christmas Stroll. No Sunday movie.**

Dec. 12, 2006, Tues., S.D.#1 Jr. High Concert, 7:30pm.

Dec. 19, 2006, Tues. evening, PCHS Holiday concert.

**Dec.19-20, 2006, Tuesday and Wednesday during schooltime,
S.D.#1 Christmas programs.**

Dec. 22, 2006, Friday, Cutler Bros. Comedy Night

**Feb. 20-24, 2007, Missoula Children's Theater, rehearsals during
week and performances on Saturday. No movies this weekend.**

March 6, 2007, Tues., S.D.#1 concert, evening.

April 3, 2007, Tues., annual Rotary Talent Show.

April 17, 2007, Tues., PCHS Festival Concert

May 22, 2007, Tues., PCHS Pops Concert

May 24, 2007, Thurs., S.D.#1 Concert, evening

May 25-26, 2007, Memorial Day weekend, usually closed

Kialto Community Theatre

418 Main Street Deer Lodge, Montana 59722 P.O.Box 874



www.deerlodgerialto.com



Then

Communtiy Goal:
Recreate the historic
Rialto Theatre to provide
a performing arts and
movie center for future
generations to enjoy.



Now

History

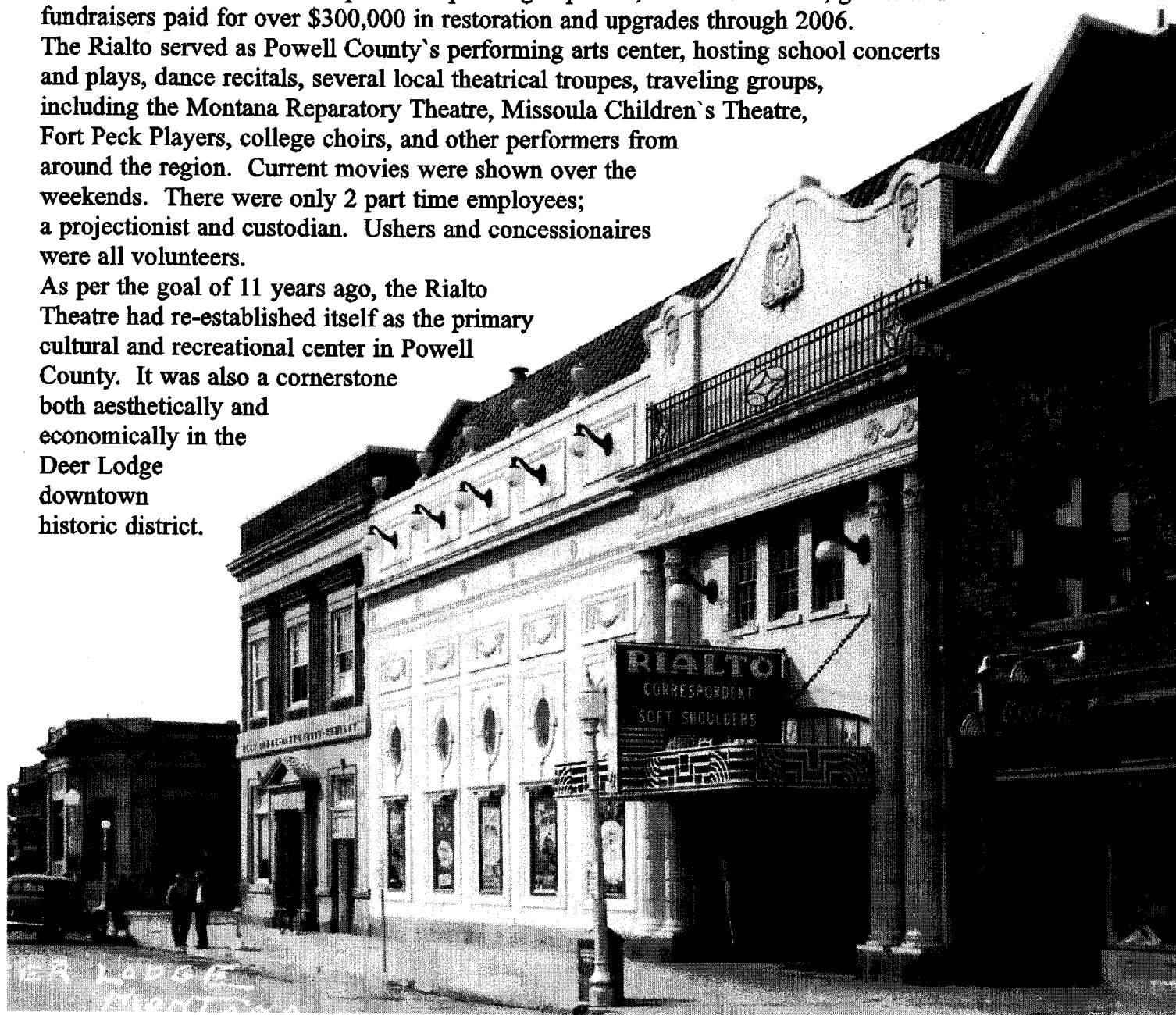
The Rialto Theatre was built in 1921 by the Rialto Theatre Company using a design by architect Walter Arnold. The theatre typifies the Beaux-Arts style of American "movie palace" architecture popular in the early part of the twentieth century. The building and materials had remained virtually unchanged since construction, including ornate chandeliers, murals, and wall coverings. With 400 seats in the downstairs auditorium and 300 seats in the balcony the building could host almost any community event. The Rialto Theatre was owned and operated by the Jens Hansen, Sr. family until 1995 when the family decided to sell the property. Coincidentally, Powell County was having economic focus group sessions. The priority quickly changed to the community purchases of the Rialto Theatre. Within 30 days \$90,000 was raised from former and local residents. A local 501(c)3 non-profit 11 member board was formed to manage their historic treasure.

The theatre was in disrepair. The community galvanized into action. Thousands of hours were spent in cleaning, painting, and restoration. The National Park Service at Grant Kohrs Ranch aided the theatre in 1988 to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places because of its architectural significance.

Concession income and rent paid for operating expenses, while memorials, grants and fundraisers paid for over \$300,000 in restoration and upgrades through 2006.

The Rialto served as Powell County's performing arts center, hosting school concerts and plays, dance recitals, several local theatrical troupes, traveling groups, including the Montana Repertory Theatre, Missoula Children's Theatre, Fort Peck Players, college choirs, and other performers from around the region. Current movies were shown over the weekends. There were only 2 part time employees; a projectionist and custodian. Ushers and concessionaires were all volunteers.

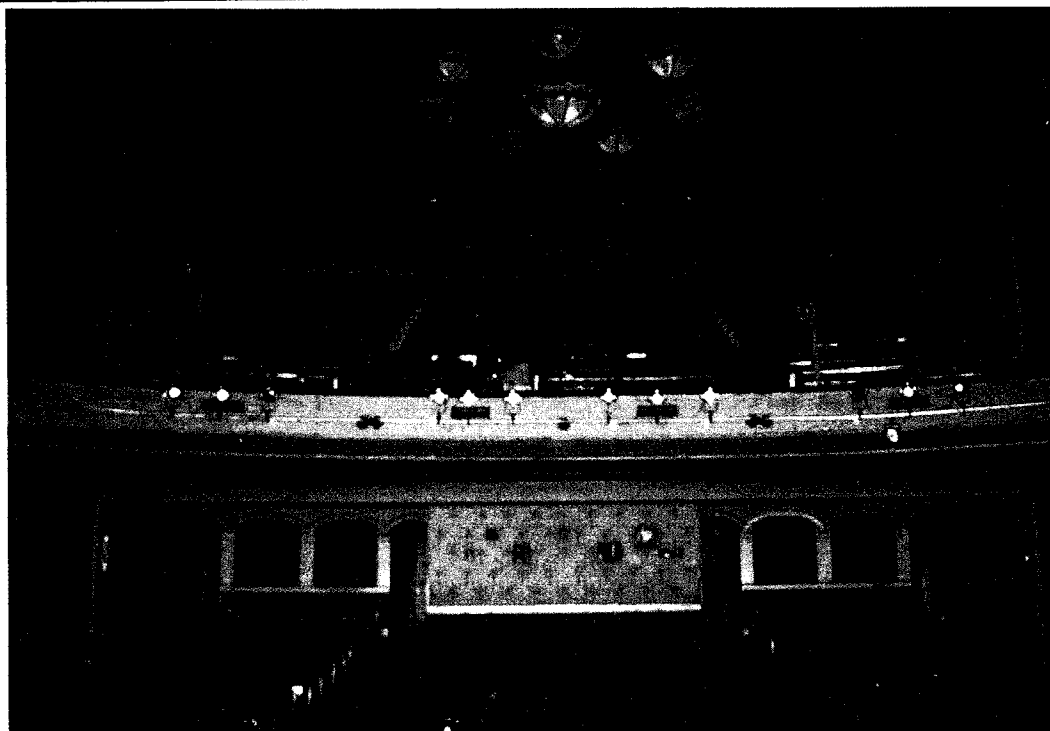
As per the goal of 11 years ago, the Rialto Theatre had re-established itself as the primary cultural and recreational center in Powell County. It was also a cornerstone both aesthetically and economically in the Deer Lodge downtown historic district.

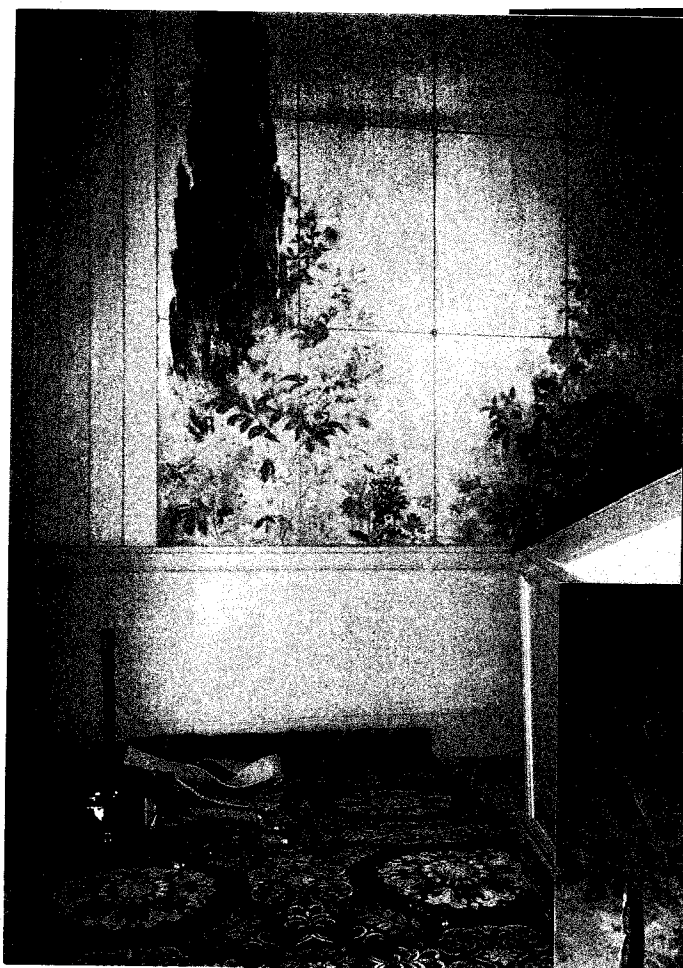


↓→ Rialto
Facade with
Restored Marquee



→ View of
Balcony and
auditorium
from stage





↑ Balcony Ramp Mural with
New Carpet Install Oct. 2006.

↗ Clock Over Stage Side



↑ One of six 1921
Stage Backdrops

← Interior
Decorative
Elements



- ↑ Marble Ticket Booth
- ↖ Entrance Lobby
- ↙ New Carpeting
- ↓ Auditorium Chandelier

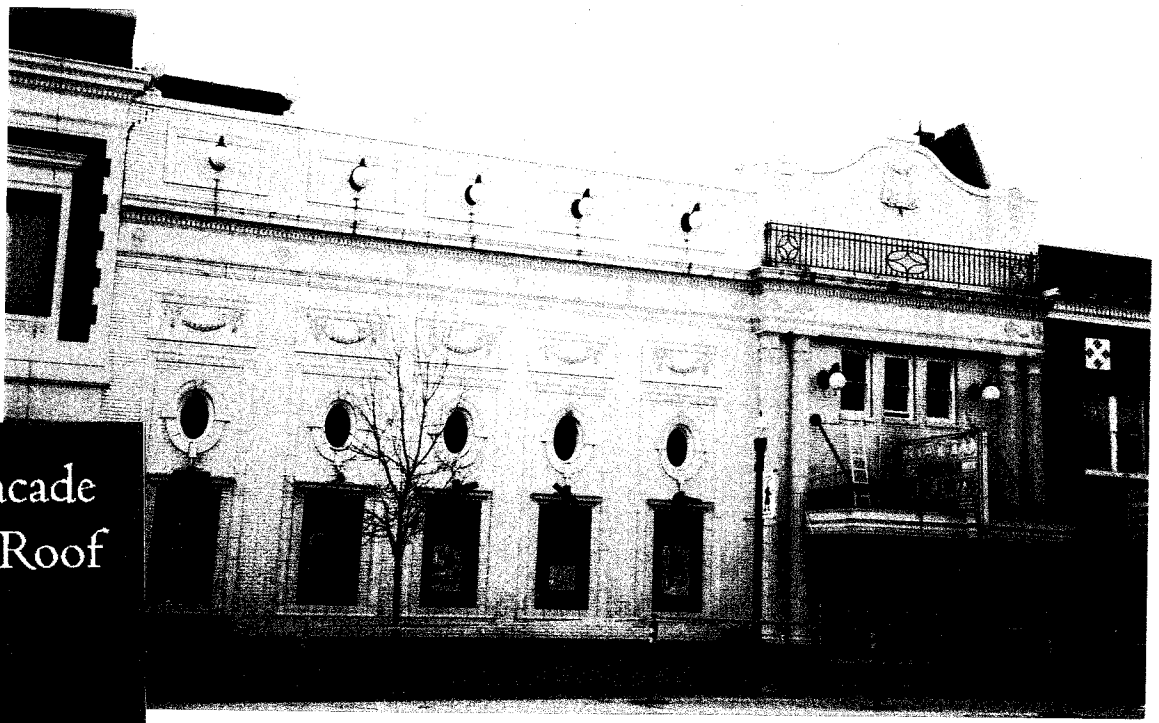


THE FIRE

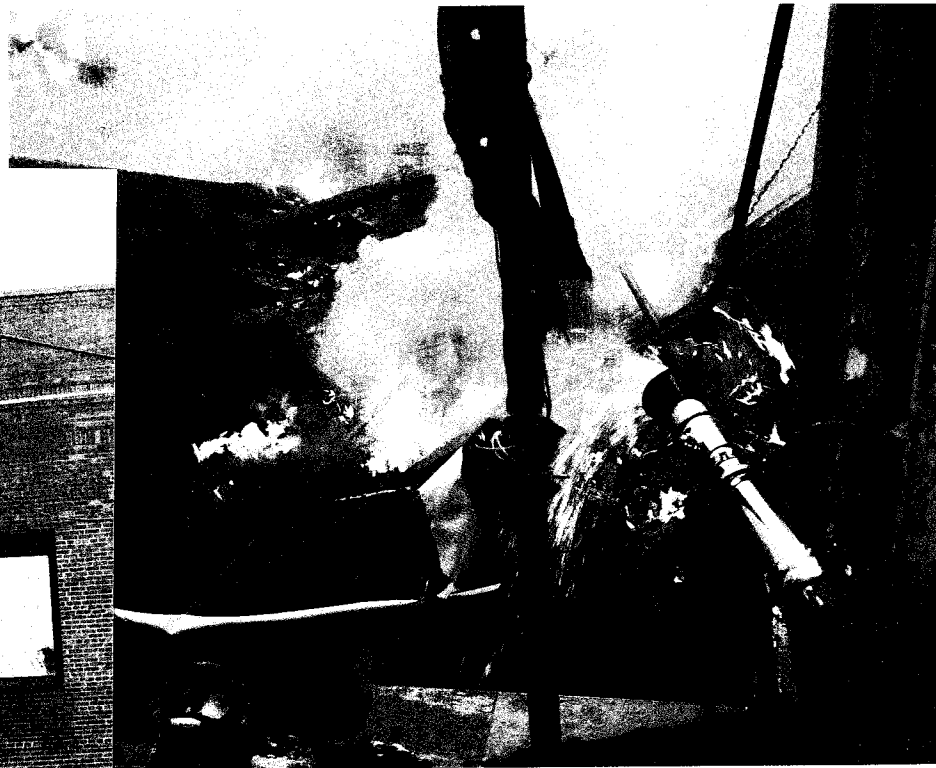
November 4, 2006, a devastating fire severely damaged the Rialto Theatre. Tearful onlookers watched in disbelief as they saw the flames rage into the night. The community, Montana, and caring folks from around the country were in mourning for days.

Volunteer firefighters from three departments were able to save the ornate façade with its terra cotta ornamentation, all the brick walls, the marquee, projection room, stage, dressing rooms and six historic backdrops. The auditorium, balcony, office, storage areas, and most of the lobby were lost in the blaze. The theatre that had been the heart of the community for 85 years was lost, until...

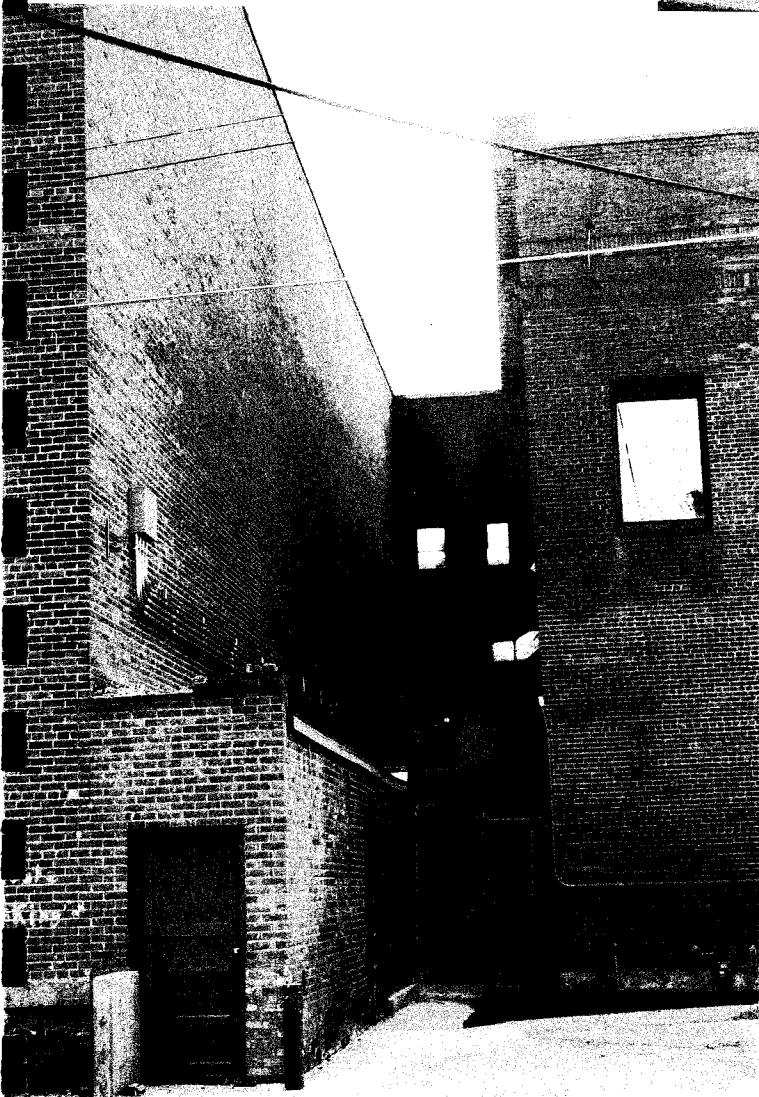


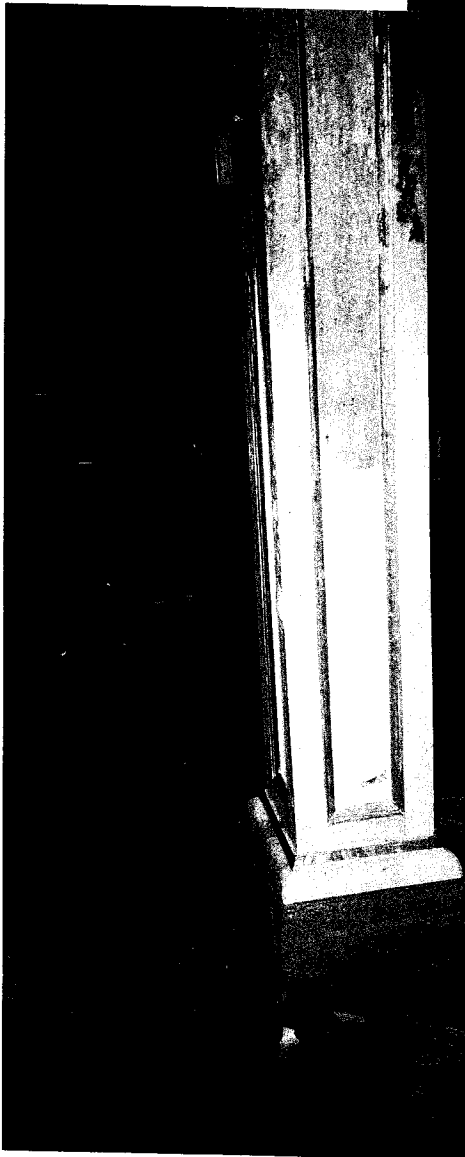


→ Rialto Facade
*Notice No Roof




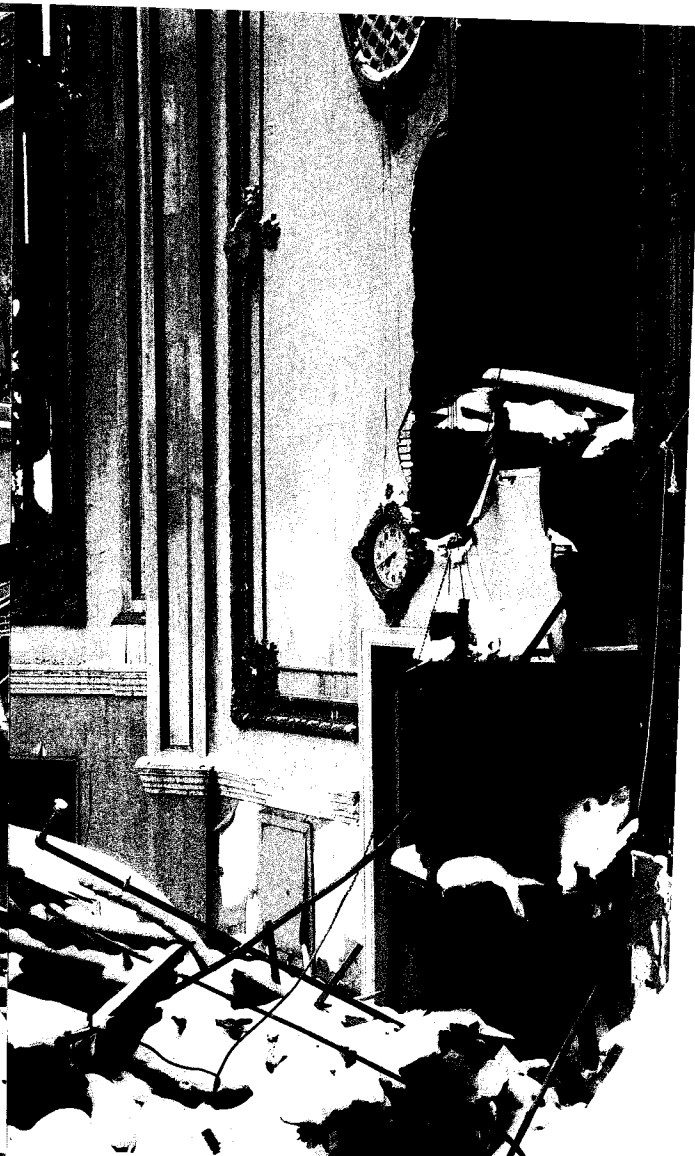
↑ Spraying Fire from Stage
← Back View of Building



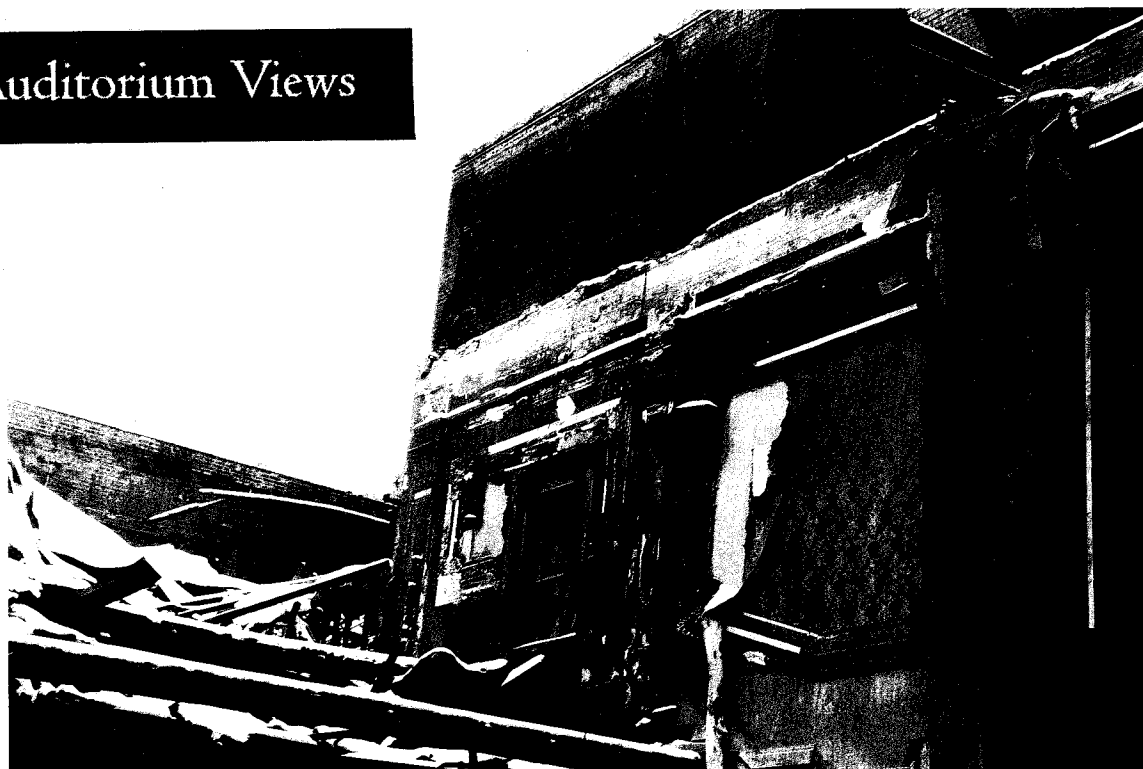


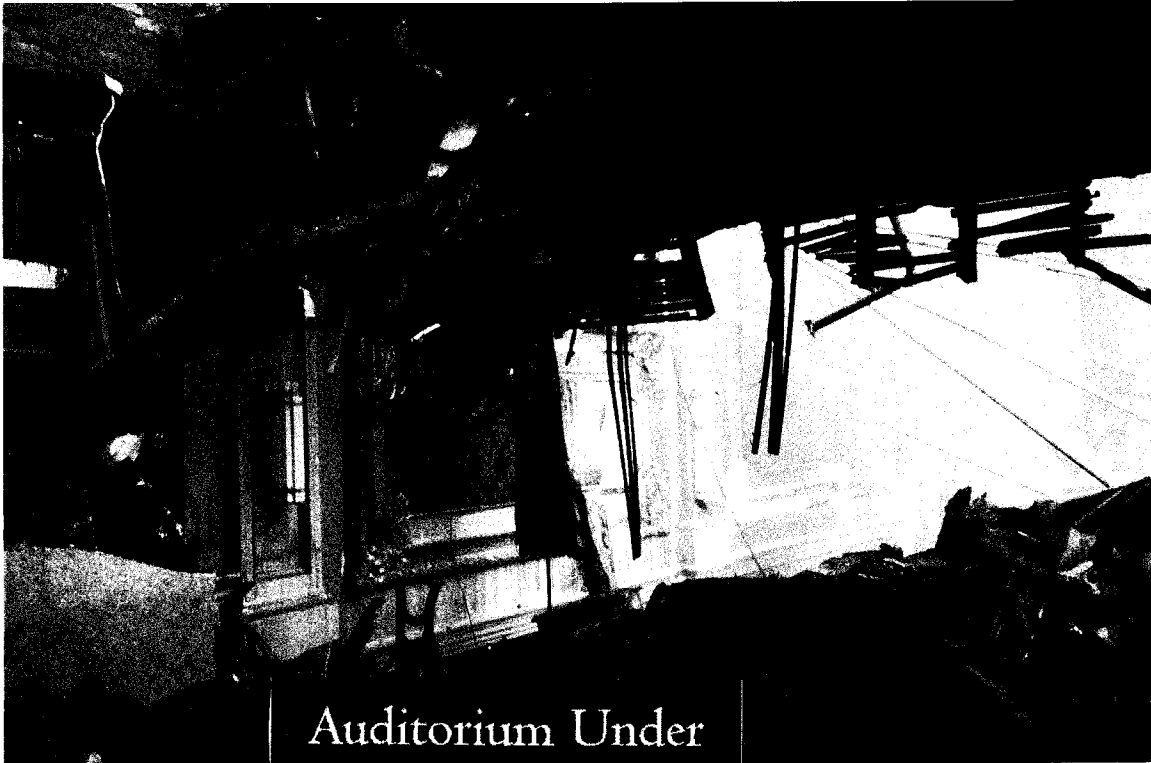
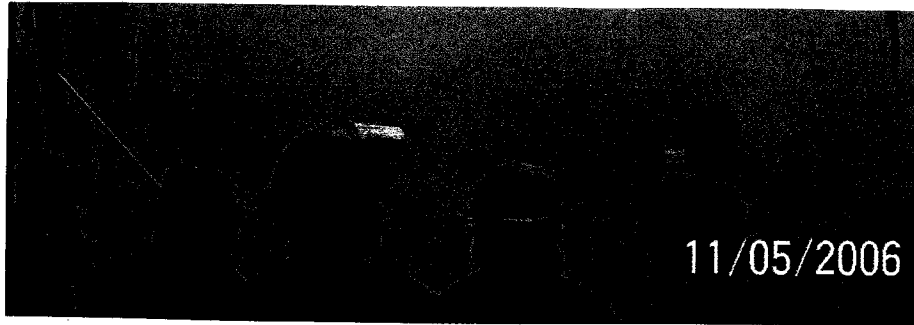
↑ Balcony
← Lobby
↓ Concession Stand



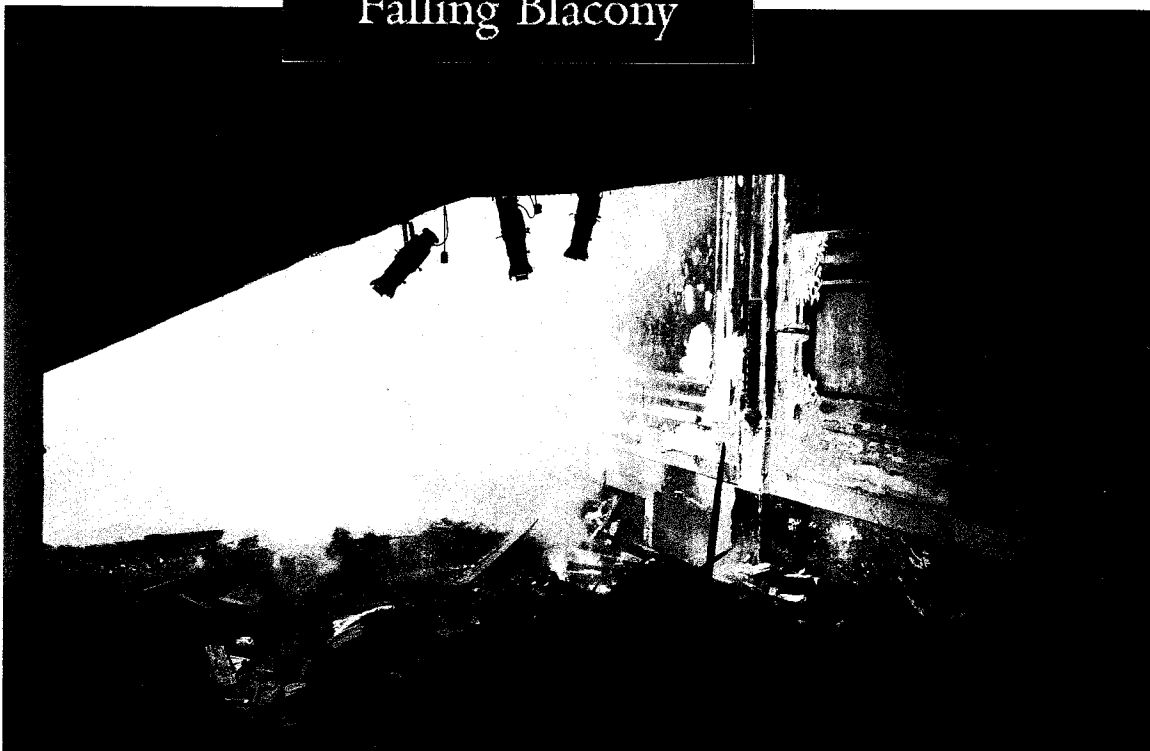


Auditorium Views





Auditorium Under
Falling Blacony



The Future

A community meeting was held November 20, 2006 by the Rialto Community Theatre Board. A standing room only event, the board answered questions raised in the community. They strongly urged that we rebuild to retain the history and for the sake of the community, but most of all, for the benefit of our children and generations to come. Besides the schools, rebuilding the Rialto will be the largest local community building effort in the history of Powell County.

Numerous community groups have contributed and organized fundraisers and memorials. An additional \$300,000 was received from the Rialto's insurance company. The board has begun an intensive grant writing campaign and has entered into contracts with Beudette Consulting Engineers, EAU. Reconstruction will be completed in the following phases:

- Phase 1, Debris Removal and Roof Construction;
Debris removal has been contracted to Gilman's Construction of Butte. Steel columns will be erected inside the theatre by local contractors. Wooden trusses will be manufactured by a Montana company. A rubber roof shall be put on to enclose the structure.
- Phase 2, Complete the Interior; and
- Phase 3, Open for Operation.





Clean Up



Has Begun!

Rialto fund-raiser

Boomers are coming

DEER LODGE — The show "Boomers" — featuring harmony and humor from the Baby Boomer generation — comes to the Central Park Center, 444 Montana Ave., in Deer Lodge at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 30.

Proceeds will go toward into a building fund for recently burned Rialto Theatre.

Tickets can be purchased in advance at Unique Hair Design, Pioneer Savings and Loan and Peoples Bank of Deer Lodge. Adult tickets are \$15; senior citizens and student tickets are \$12.

The Rialto board is looking to sell out this show, a spokesman said.

"Boomers" is performed by Steve Nelson, John Glueckert, Neal Lewing and Bob Mazurek, who accompany their four-part harmonies on a variety of instruments. Trish Tavenner, a former Deer Lodge resident, rounds out the ensemble on the piano.

The show is a nostalgic reminiscence of significant events and music from the end of World War II through the end of the Kennedy era, and the five things important to all boy Baby Boomers — cars, clothes, music, dances and girls.

Songs run the musical gamut from "Rags to Riches," "Misty" and "Blue Suede Shoes" to "When I Fall in Love," "Smile" and "Purple People Eater." Also included are compliments to early musical stars like Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Hank Williams and Bob Dylan, and such groups as Peter, Paul and Mary, The Mills Brothers and The Drifters.

And, of course, no representation of '50's culture would be complete without a tribute to the King himself, Elvis.

For details, call 846-2530.

Port Polson Players donating show

DEER LODGE — Upon hearing the news of the Nov. 4 fire that destroyed the historic Rialto Theatre, Port Polson Players artistic and managing directors Karen and Neal Lewing offered to bring their most recent production, "Boomers,"

to Deer Lodge to help get the fund-raising ball rolling to restore the historic facility.

On cover

The cast from 'Boomers.'

The Lewings, owners of the Polson theater, also co-founded and produced the Old Prison Players for its first 13 years. Of the nearly 50 Deer Lodge shows staged by the Lewings, "Oliver!" "Brigadoon" and "The Music Man" were performed at the Rialto.

Phil Maxwell, of the Rialto board, said that Port Polson Players troupe is donating the show so that all proceeds go toward rebuilding efforts for the theater.

Maxwell said letters of support have been pouring in since the fire. It seems that the 1921 Rialto is not only a famous landmark for the town of Deer Lodge, it is also a treasure for the entire state of Montana.

Said Karen Lewing: "We just closed 'Boomers' the week before the fire. The show sold out for us in Polson and was received with standing ovations nightly. The whole cast jumped at the chance to bring it to Deer Lodge to help out."

The Rialto was purchased by the town of Deer Lodge in 1996 and listed on the National Historic Register in 1998. Since then, more than 300 volunteers have pitched in countless hours of time and energy to bring the theater back to its former glory. School programs, Christmas concerts, talent shows and plays became standard fare in the past several years, in addition to movies.

"Those ashes are little parts of all of us," Maxwell said.



Wednesday
November 8, 2006



STANDARD OPINION

Rialto fire

Deer Lodge theater needs your help

Think for a moment if the Washoe Theatre in Anaconda burned to the ground, or the Mother Lode Theatre in Butte caught fire and was severely damaged.

That is what the town of Deer Lodge is going through with the destruction of the Rialto Theater on Main Street. The theater burned on Saturday, and all that remains is the facade, ticket booth and the stage.

The theater serves as a community center for Deer Lodge as well as a great place to host live shows.

Built in 1921, the theater is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It has had several thousand dollars worth of renovations and upgrades. To see it all reduced to ashes is an emotional blow to the community.

The directors of the theater are just trying to get their feet under them from this tragedy. Most likely, a community center of some sort will replace the interior of the building, while keeping the facade.

We call on all businesses in the region to step up and help with the rebuilding of this landmark. The Standard will follow the progress of the rebuild and keep the public informed with updates.

As soon as a rebuilding plan is developed, we hope that everyone will find a way to lend a hand and return the Rialto to its former glory.

Missoulian

A6

Tuesday,
November 28, 2006

Opinion

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Missoulian strives to present ideas from a diverse array of writers. Missoulian editorials express the views of the newspaper's editorial board. Signed commentary, columns, letters and editorial cartoons represent the independent view of the authors.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Publisher John VanSlydonck, Editor Sherry De-
Editorial Page Editor Steve Woodruff

MISSOULIAN EDITORIAL

Can Deer Lodge resurrect the Rialto?

SUMMARY:

Burned theater is an important landmark – and more. From disaster can come civic success.

On Nov. 4, fire broke out in Deer Lodge's historic Rialto Theater, badly damaging an entertainment venue and landmark dating to 1921. The fire brought a disappointing end to an 11-year renovation and renewal project involving volunteers throughout the community.

Or did it?

The fire that burned the Rialto may be rekindling the kind of community spirit that led, in 1995, to acquisition of the classic playhouse by a nonprofit, community-based organization. Rialto Community Theater Inc. raised enough money in just 30 days to buy the theater and begin the long volunteer-based effort

to restore it.

That decision, to buy the theater to secure a piece of Deer Lodge history, to maintain a useful venue for movies and performances and to create a kind of community center was telling. There are a lot of things you could say to describe Deer Lodge, but few things would tell you as much as you can get from knowing the community rallied to buy the Rialto and dedicate it to community use.

We don't know all the reasons why you find some Montana towns always on the upswing while other comparable towns spiral into decline. As with people, some communities seem in control of their fate while others seem controlled by events.

Some are focused on their future, others seem fixated on a heyday long past. Buying a theater may be no big deal, but being the kind of community that comes together to secure a beloved landmark is. Such a venture can be unifying and energizing. It's the kind of thing that draws people into community involvement, the kind of thing that bolsters pride. It's the kind of thing that helps generate a sense of empowerment – a sense that, individually and collectively, we really can make a difference in this world.

A good example of this in Missoula might be the Carousel. It's been a wonderful community asset, a great tourist attraction and a delight to Missoulians

young and old. But the Carousel itself is dwarfed in significance and effect by the community-wide effort involved in funding, making and maintaining it.

Well, Deer Lodge bought the Rialto and renovated it. But now it's burned. It's a terrible disappointment. But, rather than the end of the Rialto, the fire's starting to look more like the middle. The community already is rallying to rebuild. How? When? Where will they get the money? They haven't gotten that far yet. The only certain thing is that the project is daunting.

Can they pull it off? Will a restored Rialto rise from its ashes? Here's hoping – and betting – Deer Lodge succeeds.

History up in flames: Deer Lodge stunned as venerable Rialto Theater ravaged by fire
By KIM BRIGGEMAN of the Missoulian



Ted Johnson, right, and Lee Jewell, both with the Rialto Community Theater Board, spent their day Thursday sifting through the rubble with a structural engineer and

insurance officials.

Photo by MICHAEL GALLACHER/Missoulian

DEER LODGE – Election Day was also chili dinner night at Granville Stuart School last week. Steve Owens attended the feed, a fundraiser for his niece and other high school students to make a Close-Up trip to the East Coast next spring.

He almost didn't get his chili "It took me 15 minutes from the front door to get in line," Owens said. "I don't know if I'd get this many hugs if I'd have lost a relative."

In a sense, he did.

A few blocks away, a handful of firemen were showering water on the smoldering guts of Deer Lodge's proud Rialto Theater. The Nov. 4 fire that had

destroyed the balcony and roof and ravaged the inside of the theater three nights earlier, and had sent flames shooting 50 to 60 feet in the air, needed to be subdued once and for all before a fire inspector could do his work.

Stunned townsfolk, many of whom joined forces with Owens to save the historic theater from the auction block in 1995, snapped photographs or peered over the police tape at the still-intact facade on Main Street.

"The volunteer fire departments did a phenomenal job. We could have lost this whole block," said Kirk Sandquist, president of the adjacent People's Bank.

The fire was reported at 5:40 p.m. The Saturday movie was due to start at 7:30.

"If you look at what could have happened. They could have had a theater full of kids," said Linda Spaulding, who owns a print shop two doors down.

Outside on the Rialto marquee, the weekend flick was still advertised. It was Kevin Costner's latest offering, "The Guardian."

Of all the movies 83-year-old Jim Gilbert saw at the Rialto growing up, "Gone With the Wind" sticks out.

He worked as an usher for the Hansens of Butte, who built the theater in 1921 - a couple of

years before Gilbert was born. By high school, he was working in the projection room when Rhett Butler and Scarlett O'Hara rolled into town in 1939.

Gilbert remembers gasping along with everyone else when Clark Gable told Vivien Leigh he didn't give a damn.

"It was the first time I'd ever heard such a terrible saying in a movie," Gilbert said last week. "I couldn't believe it. I didn't think they'd ever put that on the screen."

The Rialto was put up for sale in 1995. Amid reports that a potential out-of-state buyer would turn the building into a casino, Gilbert, Owens and others formed Rialto Community Theatre Inc. They rallied the town to raise \$90,000 in a month.

Symbolic theater seats were sold for \$150 each, or \$250 for the larger loge seats in the back. The drive far exceeded the agreed sale price of \$65,000.

The Rialto became a community performing arts center, opening its doors to school concerts and programs, the annual Rotary Club talent show, live theater and civic events.

Gilbert managed the theater until he suffered a stroke.

"We used to call him Mr. Rialto," said Cindy Holst, the grade school music teacher. "That man beamed every time something happened at the theater."

Holst remembers Gilbert standing just off stage during the annual Christmas programs.

"He'd be right there in front, watching for fainters and hauling them off the stage," she said.

"A few of them got overheated, but nothing serious," Gilbert said. "I enjoyed that more than anything, I think."

What is Deer Lodge without the

Rialto?

"I can't tell you that," said Gilbert, searching for words. "It just flabbergasts. It's just something you don't believe. You think you can go down there tomorrow and it'll still be there."

Owens estimated 300 volunteers took turns selling popcorn, taking tickets and ushering at movies and other events before the Rialto burned down.

"People had so much invested in it," he said.

As the community's hub, the theater showed a new first-run movie each weekend, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights.

"Parents knew it was a safe place they could bring their kids," Owens said. "It was affordable - \$4 and \$3 for 11 and under. And that just went up from \$3 and \$2 last year."

The theater, which was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1998, retained its original function and its beaux-arts-style architecture - replete with Corinthian columns and ornate balustrades.

Well over \$300,000 was raised in the past 11 years to restore the Rialto to its grand old style, including nearly \$100,000 for a state-of-the-art lighting system.

"It was wonderful," Owens said.

"If you wanted to do the 'Wizard of Oz,' you could create a tornado right there on the stage with the lights."

Owens said a soundboard was newly in place for a high school production a few days before the fire. The speakers for a \$30,000 surround-sound system were still boxed up when the fire struck. They were scheduled to be hung last week.

"We were just about there,"

Rialto board member Lee Jewell said with a sigh.

When they entered the Rialto, theater-goers felt as though

they'd stepped into the 1940s.

The ticket booth area had a marble tile floor. "Rialto" was spelled out in marble wainscoting.

Lush new carpeting ran down the aisles and up the stairway to the balcony.

In the past year, Jewell spearheaded a painting project in the lobby, replacing what had been turquoise green walls with the original ivory with metallic gold trim.

The ceiling of the theater itself was dominated by a large central chandelier.

"When people looked up, it was impressive," Owens said.

On the stage were six backdrops from the bygone years, notable for their versatility, said Owens.

"There was one forest scene, and it was a fjord if you were doing something Scandinavian, and the Gulf of Siam if you were doing the 'King and I.'"

The projection booth survived the flames, protected as it is by a concrete shell designed to prevent a fire inside the booth from spreading. The nitrate film used in the early movie era was highly flammable, Owens said.

The stage is intact as well, protected by the original fireproof curtain.

An investigator arrived in Deer Lodge at midweek and pinned down the source of the Rialto fire. His findings are expected to be released this week.

Speculation runs rampant on the streets. It was the wiring for the new light system, or some old wiring. It was the popcorn machine. It was the new butter melter for the popcorn machine. There's no debate over who gets the credit for holding the flames to one building.

In the window of Spaulding's print shop is the message,

"Thank you Firemen and Volunteers."

Roughly 50 firefighters battled the blaze through the night Nov. 4 without injury. All were volunteers, from departments in Deer Lodge, Racetrack and Garrison. Seven fire trucks were on the scene. Lift equipment was provided by Sun Mountain Logging and NorthWestern Energy.

Mere inches from the north wall of the Rialto is Lincare Home Oxygen and Respiratory Services. The oxygen tanks were quickly moved to safety.

"They did everything right," one observer said.

Lincare and the People's Bank on the other side of the Rialto received smoke damage. All four neighboring businesses on the block felt some effects from the 800,000 gallons of water used to fight the fire, sometimes from nearby rooftops.

"Our firemen are awesome. They're awesome," said Gloria Andersen, whose Keystone Drug is across Main Street from the Rialto. "It was just amazing that they could contain it."

Money to rebuild the Rialto started pouring in even before the last flames were extinguished - "some thousands of dollars already," Owens said. The local humane society, which places donation jars for animal welfare around town, changed them into Rialto Theater jars. Andersen said customers at Keystone Drug are slipping dollar bills into the penny change cup since she put "Rialto" on it.

Students at Granville Stuart School have broached the subject of a fundraiser for the theater to superintendent Tom Cotton.

And Shana Forsman, a local businesswoman, had a Web site - www.deerlodgerialto.com - up and running the day after the fire. It includes news updates

and ports for letters, memories, pictures, prayers and credit-card donations. Money can also be mailed to Rialto Theater, P.O. Box 874, Deer Lodge, MT 59722.

A structural engineer deemed the surviving walls of the theater unsound, and it's estimated the facade alone will cost up to \$125,000 to save.

"Spend the money to save the facade, then build from there," suggested Kevin Giles, Powell County High School Class of '70, on the Web site's "Thoughts and Prayers" section. "The facade is the 'face' of the theater and the symbol of hope that all is not lost."

A town meeting has been set for Monday, Nov. 20 at 7 p.m. at the Pen Convention Center on Main Street. By then, Owens said, all the reports should be finalized and the theater's future can be discussed.

"We're pretty sure we're going to do something," he said.

Meanwhile, school holiday programs will have to return to their former sites - the gymnasiums at the high school and Central Park Center.

Gone will be what Jewell called a favorite sight in the Rialto.

"It was great to watch the little kindergarten kids look out from that big stage and recite a line in front of 700 seats," he said.

"I guess I'm just real happy the kids had that experience," Holst said. "That's been exciting for them. They know what they had, especially now that it's gone." Gymnasiums are far from ideal sites for concerts and plays, Cotton said.

"We don't even have bleachers on both sides at CPC. I can handle about 400 people, and the sound is terrible. A gym is not made for music concerts. But we'll do the best we can."

Likewise, Cotton hopes the movies scheduled for the Rialto can be shown elsewhere in town. "I think it's important that everybody's trying to get things going again," he said. "What happens if you let things slide, if the Rotarians decide, well, we don't have a place for the talent show so we'll cancel it this year? "Once you start doing that, you lose things for good."

Reporter Kim Briggeman can be reached at 523-5266 or at kbriggeman@missoulain.com

Back to the future

A town meeting has been set to discuss the future of the Rialto Theater at 7 p.m. on Nov. 20 in the Pen Convention Center on Main Street in Deer Lodge. The meeting is open to all. Donations for the theater's rebuilding can be mailed to Rialto Theater, P.O. Box 874, Deer Lodge, MT 59722.

Theater destroyed

By Kate Schwab
News Editor

A shocked crowd stood rooted to the sidewalk Saturday night, watching with disbelief as flames engulfed Deer Lodge's beloved Rialto Theater.

The fire was already consuming the building when first passersby reported it, about 5:40 p.m. Deer Lodge, Garrison and Racetrack fire departments all responded to the alarm, Rialto caretaker Steve Owens said. Powell County police, Montana Highway Patrol officers and city employees worked together through the night, hoping to prevent the incredible blaze from spreading to neighboring structures.

Acrid smoke continued to pour from the theater's top for the next two days. Late Monday afternoon, the fire was still going, and fire hoses were continuing to spray water from the theater's waterlogged stage, one of the only interior areas that remains.

"This hits the heart of Deer Lodge," longtime Rialto volunteer Ron Mjelde said Monday.

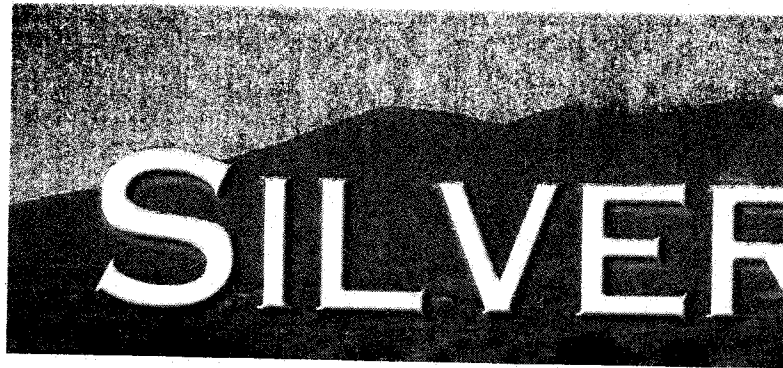
Many community members said they were grateful for the volunteer fire departments' quick responses, cooperative

effort and tireless work. Many were thankful for the many lives that were saved that night. The fire had not yet started, and the building was empty when the fire broke out. It was more than a half-hour before firefighters got inside, preparing to save the building.

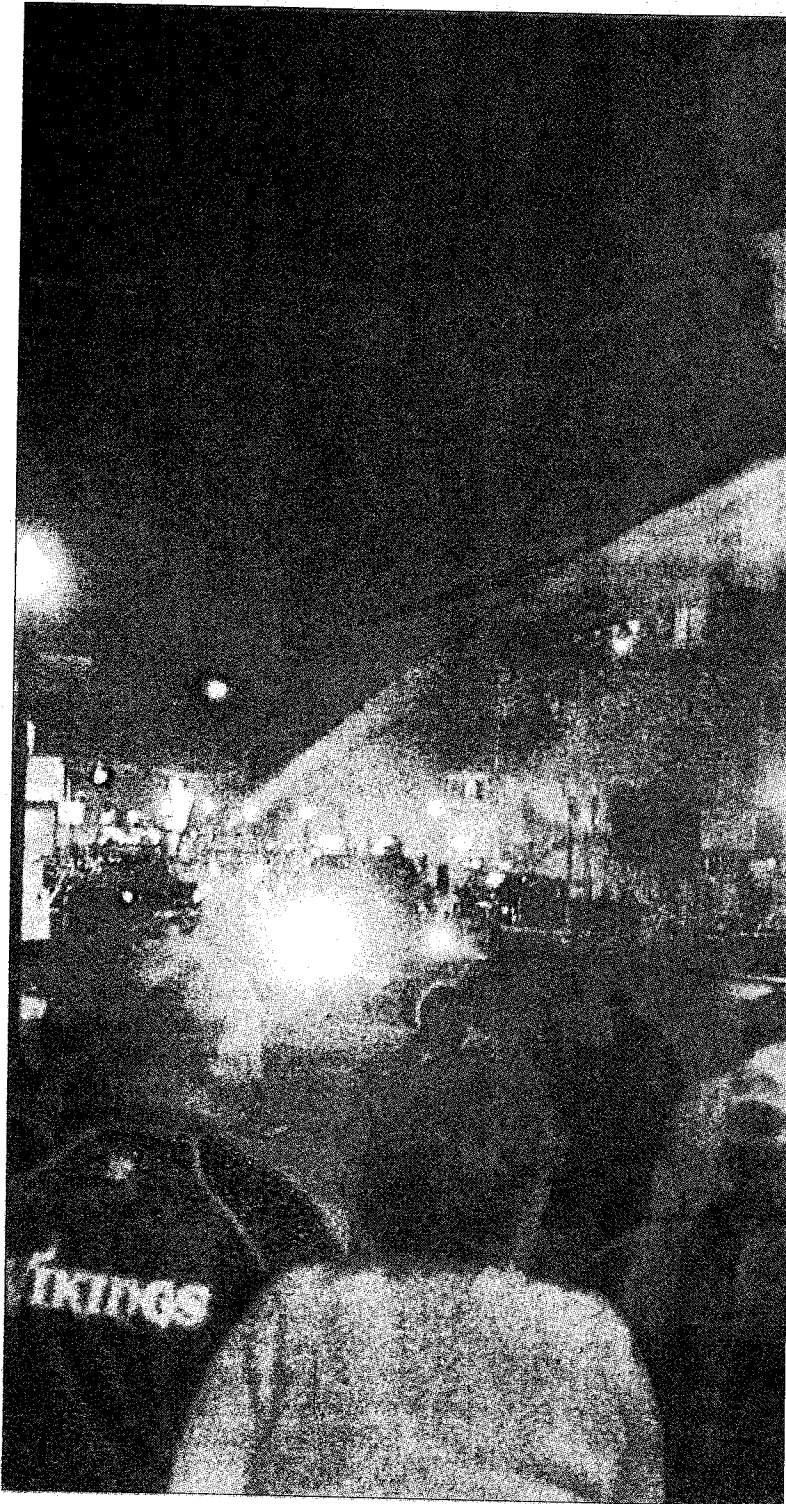
At press time, neither the fire marshal nor a structural engineer had inspected the building for fire, and possible future damage to the theater and its historic facade.

For safety reasons, the street between Milwaukee and Main has been blocked to vehicles. The alley behind the Peoples Bank has also been blocked with crime tape. An area blocks pedestrian traffic from the alley to the theater.

Powell County Sheriff Howard said the tape was put up for two reasons. Because of the fire, police order investigation, police blocked the area as if it were a crime scene. Pedestrians may walk along the sidewalk between Milwaukee and Missouri avenues, and the street at the corner of the west-side businesses,



Year 121 - Week No. 25 Serving Deer L



The Rialto Theater's balcony and roof were completely destroyed in Saturday's fire. Hoses were still spraying from the stage on Monday afternoon, as seen in the lower section of the photo.



ed by blaze, community stunned

k; others were
all miracles that
evening movie
the theater was
n, although less
staff had been
w "The Guard-

The building is unstable and there is very real danger that part of it could collapse and hit someone walking below, Howard said, so the tape is also in place for safety reasons. He asked that the public use caution when near the theater. Crossing the tape zone will result in a \$500 fine.

Until further notice, no one may enter the theater, Howard said. Certain members of the press were briefly permitted to view some of the interior damage Monday, under police supervision, but for now, the building is completely off-limits.

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Ironically, the projection booth was one of the only things to survive the fire. The concrete bunker-like booth was added when the building was converted to show films, circa 1928, Mjelde said. The nitrate film of the time was highly flammable, so the booth's design was intended to prevent fires from starting in the booth and spreading to the rest of the theater.

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Howard said.

"Instead, the theater burned down around it," Mjelde said. The projectors got a little wet, but they, and the film inside, will be just fine. A fireproof cur-

See Rialto, page 3



Left, a Deer Lodge Volunteer Fire Dept. truck pulls up outside the Rialto Theater on Saturday night. All photos on page by Kate Schwab

Neighboring businesses unharmed by fire

By Kate Schwab
News Editor

Despite the spectacular, destructive display taking place next door at the Rialto Theater on Saturday night, both the historic Mitchell building and Peoples Bank escaped the blaze almost miraculously unscathed.

Don Cappa, owner of the Mitchell building, said the rented rooms within the structure will need to be cleaned for smoke and there was some water damage to the carpet.

"The basement's flooded," he said, adding that firefighters checked for oxygen canisters at the building's Lincare office and

made certain plenty of water kept any possibly overlooked tanks from exploding.

"We're very lucky, the fire department did a heck of a job," Cappa said, later commenting, "We were fortunate enough to have only some smoke and water damage. We owe it all to the fire departments; they did a bang-up job."

On the corner of Milwaukee and Main, neighboring Peoples Bank suffered only minimal damage, mostly from water, bank president Kirk Sandquist said Monday. A cleaning service worked over the weekend and again on Monday morning to fix up and ventilate the building, Sandquist said, and although the

doors opened a little later than usual, about 10 a.m., the bank was ready for business as usual Monday.

None of the bank's computers were damaged as a result of the fire or firefighting efforts, Sandquist said. The bank roof, which had recently been replaced, held solid through the fire, and upon inspection, was found to be secure.

"It didn't even bubble," Sandquist said. The upstairs office area is also fine, he explained.

For safety reasons, the drive-up window at Peoples Bank will be closed until further notice, Sandquist said; that area is cor-

doned off with police tape. Customers can still use the bank's parking lot, but police tape blocks vehicle traffic from driving straight through the alley behind the Rialto Theater.

Other neighboring businesses are open, but Sheriff Scott F. Howard said customers may not park on Main Street between Missouri and Milwaukee streets. The area is completely closed to vehicular traffic until further notice, he said. Pedestrians may use the east side of the sidewalk, and they may cross the street to west-side businesses, provided they do not cross the tape lines. There is a \$500 fine for violating this rule. The businesses on this block are all open for customers.

tain above the stage, also a 1920s safety precaution, helped to protect several prized original back-drop screens, which the theater board hopes to salvage. Risers and some band property belonging to Powell County High School were also protected.

Unfortunately, the beautiful balcony and lighting booth is gone, along with the roof and the audience seating area in front of the stage. Inside the theater Monday, Mjelde pointed out where a key steel support I-beam had expanded from the heat of the fire and punched through the neighboring wall. The stage lights are gone, too, and only ghostly tattered shreds hang where the big red curtain once fell. Standing on the soaking-wet stage, watching fire hoses drip down into a debris-filled pit where children once sat for shows, was unbelievable.

The building was insured, but there will not be enough money

to replace what Deer Lodge had, board members explained. They estimated the cost of duplicating the structure to be about \$10-15 million.

"We are hoping to save the façade," Lee Jewell said, adding that the building will have to be inspected for safety first.

Owens said the theater is not public property, no tax monies go toward its support and a mill levy cannot be used toward a new or rebuilt structure. He added that preservation grant money was limited to small amounts and most probably could not be used toward fixing the building.

In 1995, a group of community members raised money from all over the world to purchase the theater from the Hansen family, who had owned it since it was built in 1921, several board members and former representatives explained. The theater has been

operating for 11 years as a 501c(3) nonprofit organization, Owens said. Ticket income went to Mark Hansen owner of Silver Bow Drive-In Theater near Rocker, who rented the theater space and brought the films to Deer Lodge, Mjelde said. The whole cost of improving the building and keeping it open was covered by performance rentals, private donations and concession stand sales, Owens said. The operation was run by volunteer staff, except for a paid projectionist and custodian.

In 1998, with help from the staff at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site, the Rialto Theater was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

"We were almost there," Jewell said, describing the years of hard work that went into making the historic Beaux arts structure beautiful. Most of the building was original, including the

stenciled ceiling, orchestra pit and projection booth. Earlier this summer, the theater had been repainted and carpeted to resemble its original 1920's appearance. A new lighting system had just been installed, as well as new sound equipment. The building had also been rewired and a new boiler had recently been installed.

Theater representatives Mjelde and Jewell said the Rialto board wants to have a community meeting in the coming weeks to discuss ideas for a new performing arts center and the present theater grounds. A Web site has been set up at deerlodgerialto.com and will be updated daily, Jewell said.

The theater board is welcoming donations, ideas and offers of support. Persons who wish to donate to the theater may send contributions to PO Box 874, Deer Lodge, MT 59722, Mjelde said.

For The Next



Generation...

*Daly Mansion
Eastside Highway
Hamilton, Montana
406-363-6004*



1986

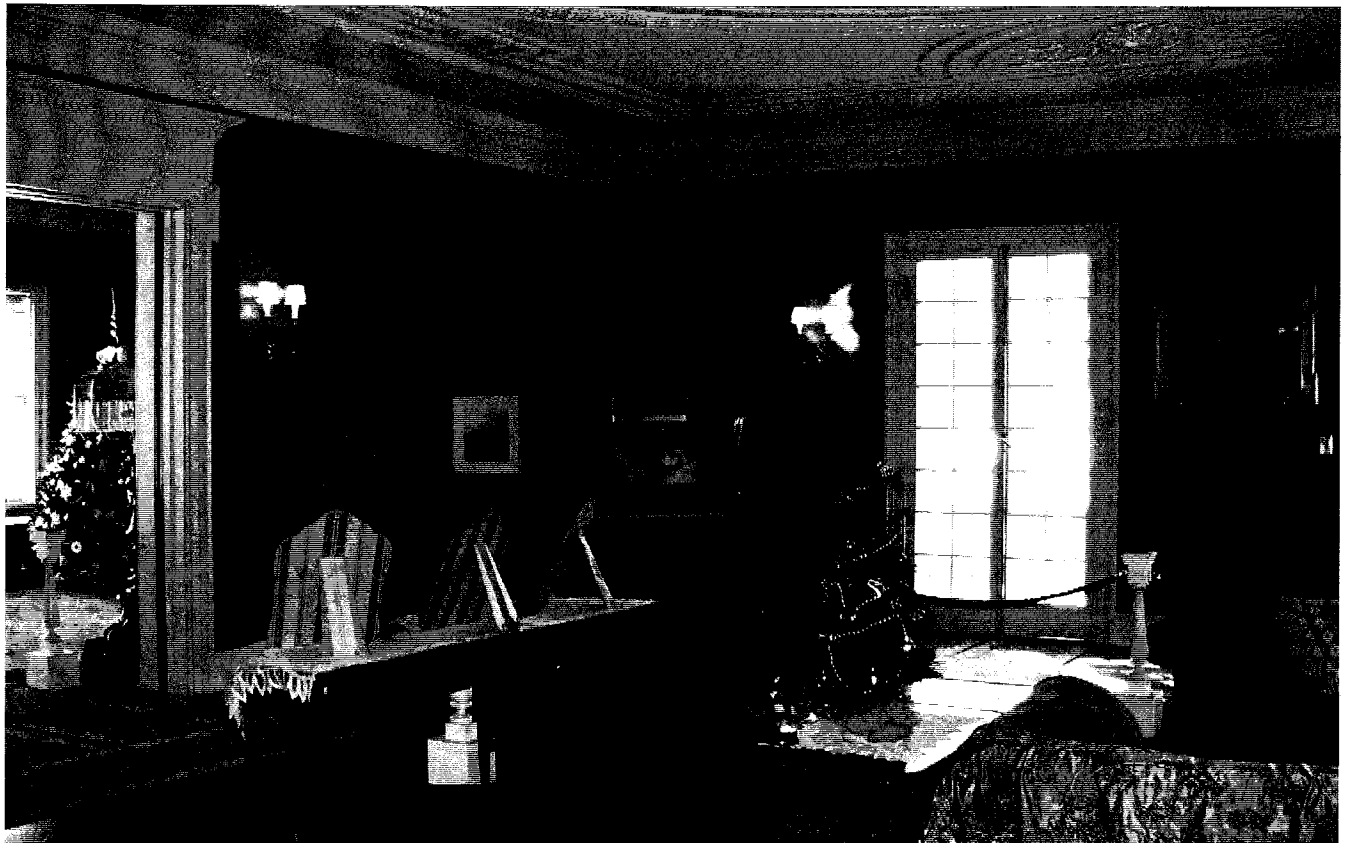


2006

*Formal Living Room S/E Corner
Before Restoration*



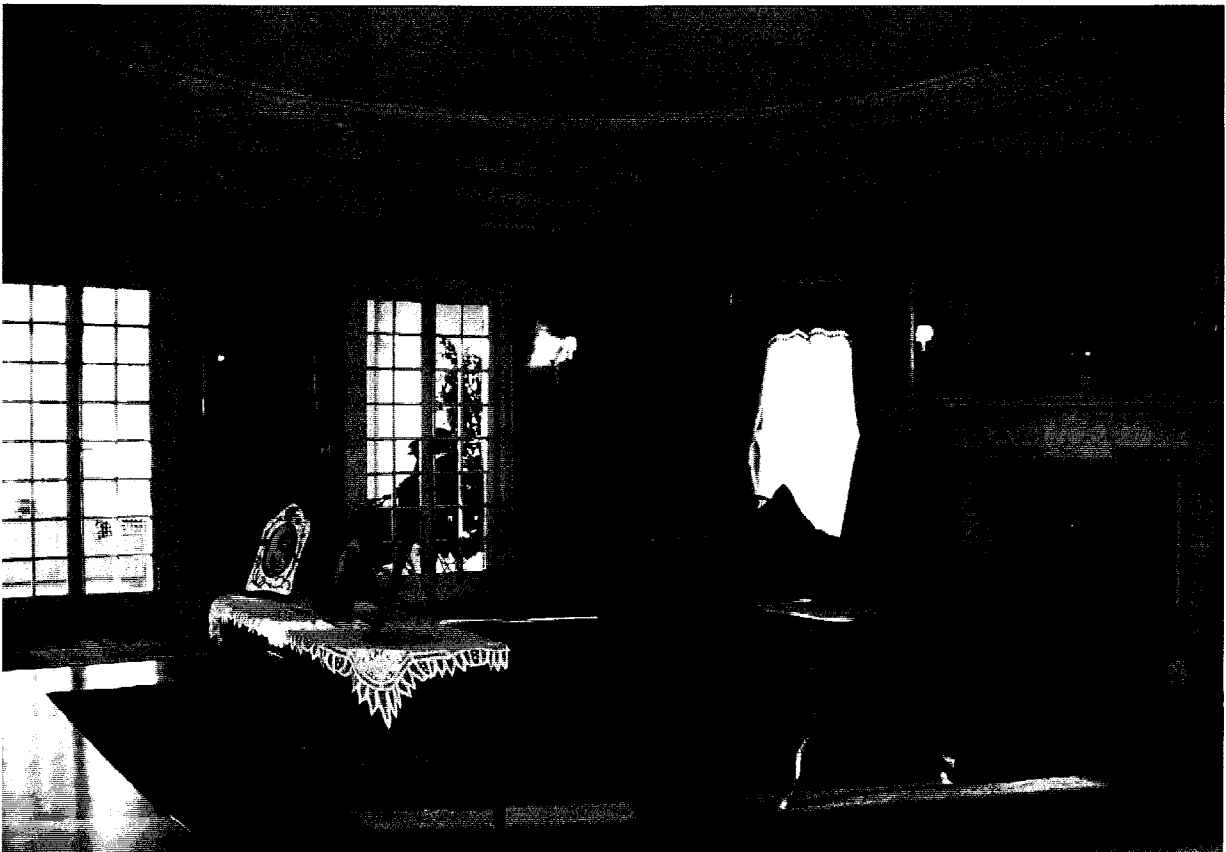
*Formal Living Room S/E Corner
After Restoration*



*Formal Living Room S/W Corner
Before Restoration*



*Formal Living Room S/W Corner
After Restoration*



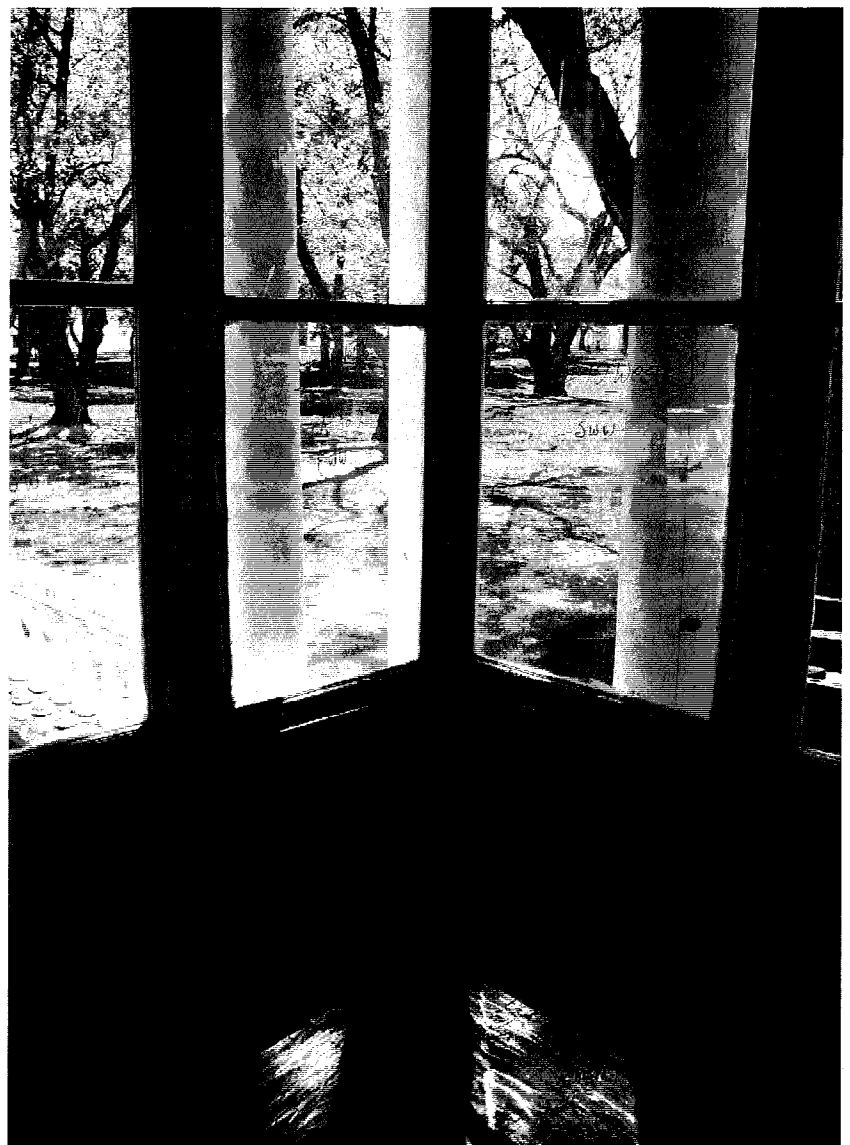
*Outside of Sun Porch
Before Restoration*



*Outside of Sun Porch
After Restoration*



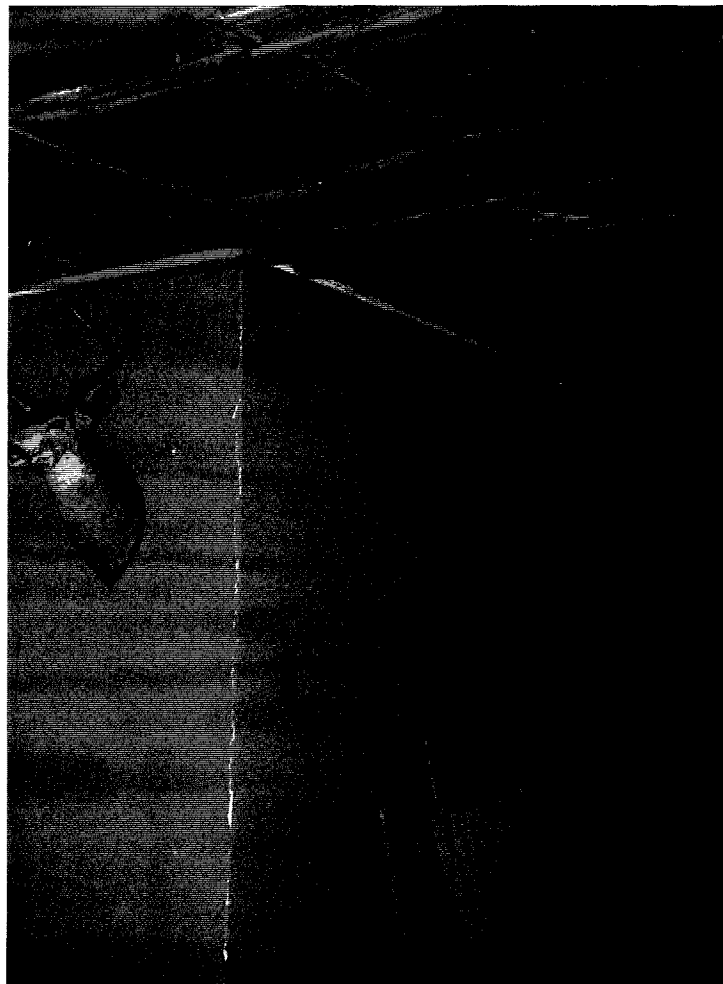
*Sun Room S/E Corner
Before Restoration*



Sun Room S/E Corner After Restoration



*Third Floor Billiard Room
Before*



*Third Floor Billiard Room
After*



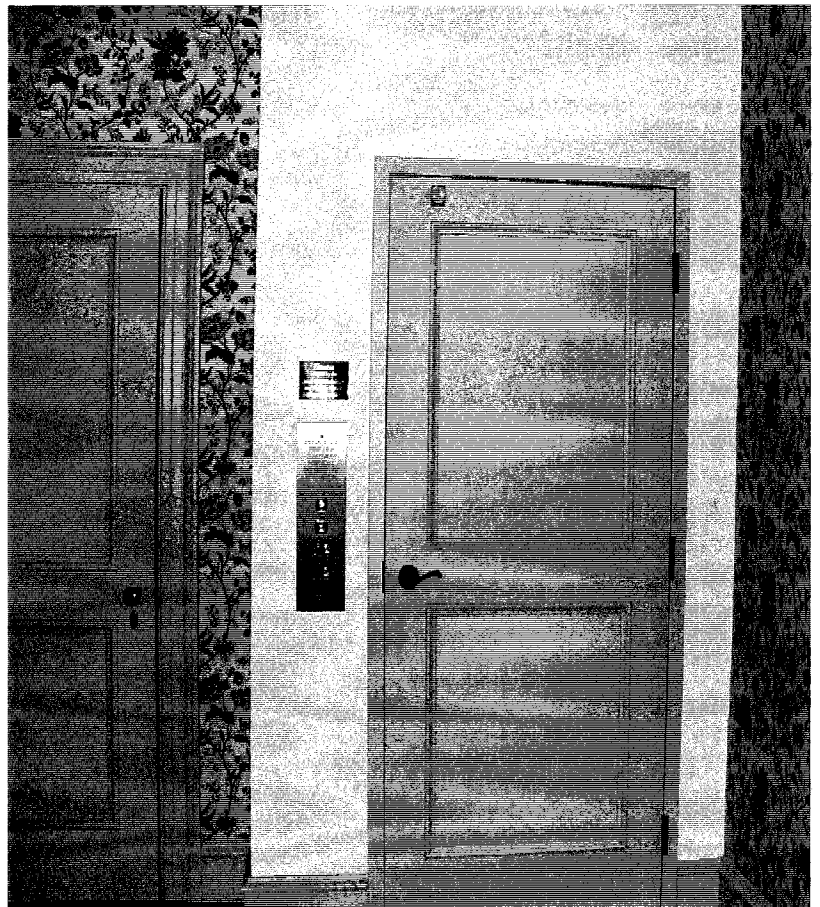
Elevator

*There is no before picture.
The elevator was added to the
Mansion so everyone, no
matter their ability to climb
stairs, can visit all three floors
of the Mansion.*



Elevator Fire Door Closed

*Notice the door was made in
the same style as others
throughout the Mansion*



Daly Mansion

Path to State Ownership

- 1886** Marcus Daly purchased the Chaffin Ranch as a summer home for his family. Although he died in 1900, he and Margaret had agreed to remodel the Mansion. Margaret hired Architect A J. Gibson of Missoula to transform the house into a 24,000 square foot Georgian Revival style home with 25 bedrooms, 15 bathroom, 3 dining rooms and 7 fireplaces. The remodel was completed in 1910.
- July 14, 1941** Margaret Daly dies in the Mansion at age 87. The house was boarded up until 1985.
- October 26, 1984** Countess Margit Sigra Besseney, last lineal grandchild of Marcus Daly dies of heart attack in New York City.
- 1985** Frances Besseney, stepson of the Countess and heir to the Daly Mansion, begins talks with state of MT to exchange Daly Mansion with forgiveness of inheritance taxes.
- May 15, 1985** Governor signs HB 701 which allows state to accept Daly Mansion in lieu of inheritance taxes. Process has until April 1986 to be completed within the 18-month probate period.
- August 25, 1986** Mansion contents auctioned. Local group gathers enough funds to purchase original dining room set.
- December 31, 1986** Legislature forgives \$400,000 of inheritance tax. Local citizens sign agreement to pay additional \$200,000 to Besseney estate by 1990.
- May 1987** Daly Mansion opened to the public. It has remained opened since that date, with longer hours during the summer season.
- 1990** Local group has only raised \$50,000 needed to pay the debt. The National Historic Trust steps forward and pays \$150,000 to estate to clear the Mansion, at which point the debt is now owed to the National Historic Trust.
- 1993** \$120,000 of the National Historic Trust note is paid with funds from the State of MT long-term Cultural Trust. The National Historic Trust forgives the remainder of the note.
- 2005** Major restoration of the Mansion begins with Save America's Treasure grant, and private donations. To date, \$1.7 million has been raised to restore the Mansion. Total project cost to restore house is estimated at \$2.2 million.

Daly Mansion
Income/Expense Comparison

Income	Jan 1 - Dec 31, 2006	Jan 1 - Dec 31, 2005	Budget
Admissions	\$ 34,100	\$ 25,116	\$ 30,000
Donations	\$ 20,400	\$ 26,816	\$ 30,000
Endowment Donations	\$ -	\$ 5,000	
Gift Shop	\$ 7,639	\$ 5,748	\$ 10,000
Grounds Rental	\$ 19,176	\$ 11,731	\$ 30,000
Special Events	\$ 51,055	\$ 54,554	\$ 90,000
Membership	\$ 23,644	\$ 20,750	\$ 20,000
Misc. Income	\$ 891	\$ 90	\$ 2,000
Total	\$ 156,905	\$ 149,805	\$ 212,000
Expenses			
Advertising	\$ 800	\$ 4,452	\$ 7,500
Building Repairs/Maint	\$ 2,310	\$ 2,704	\$ 2,500
Special Events	\$ 19,888	\$ 26,003	\$ 22,000
Grounds	\$ 9,092	\$ 9,874	\$ 6,000
Insurance	\$ 6,933	\$ 6,598	\$ 8,500
Misc. Expenses	\$ 7,839	\$ 8,280	\$ 10,000
Outside Services	\$ 7,390	\$ 9,470	\$ 17,000
Payroll	\$ 109,074	\$ 102,932	\$ 117,000
Utilities	\$ 33,744	\$ 22,801	\$ 20,000
Total	\$ 197,070	\$ 193,114	\$ 210,500
Net	\$ (40,165)	\$ (43,309)	\$ 1,500
The shortfall has been made up thru a 7% administrative fee assessed to capital campaign donations.			
Of Note:			
Utilities have risen 33%.			
We operate with only 1 1/2 employees year-round; other labor is seasonal.			
Volunteer Hours - 4,500			
	Equivalent to \$36,000 of labor based on a modest \$8/hour.		



DMPT Board Members:

Treasurer	Mary	Fox	P. O. Box 1526	Hamilton	MT	59840 375-0506	mfox@montana.com
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	Gina	Wilson	807 S. 3rd Street	Hamilton	MT	59840 363-3630	gina@wcnx.org
	Richard	Wilson	651 Hidden Arbor Way	Corvallis	MT	59828 961-3843	rleroywilson@earthlink.net
UM Ad Hoc	John	Scibek	P.O. Box 7159	Missoula	MT	59807 243-6274	Scibekjc@mso.umt.edu
Executive Director	Kim	Morris	P.O. Box	Hamilton	MT	59840 240-4146	developmentdirector@daly mansion.org

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Jane	Iten	610 Hwy 93 S	Hamilton	MT	59840 363-1010
Dale	Mahlum	10955 Hwy 93 N	Missoula	MT	59808 546-31158
Chuck	Petty	183 Eastside Highway	Hamilton	MT	59840 363-1011

DMPT Past President:

Matt	Guzik	533 Arrow Hill Road	Hamilton	MT	59840 369-6288	mattg@stockfarm.com
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